

# Introduction

## WELCOME!

Welcome to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum. Great things are happening here and we need your help to make them possible.

We are delighted that you have chosen to become part of one of the best Lincoln institutions in the world. We are looking forward to getting to know you and working with you.

## THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY & MUSEUM

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum (ALPLM) is different from every other presidential library and museum in the country. By combining scholarship and showmanship, the ALPLM communicates the amazing life and times of Abraham Lincoln in unforgettable ways.

### LIBRARY

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library (ALPL) is the premier repository for materials relating to the history of Illinois—the Prairie State. While the Library is open to the public, its rare collection of material illustrating all aspects of Illinois history is non-circulating.

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The Illinois State Historical Library was created in 1889 by the Illinois General Assembly, which charged the new library with collecting and preserving “books, pamphlets, manuscripts, monographs, writings, and other materials of historical interest and useful to the historian, bearing upon the political, religious, or social history of the State of Illinois from the earliest known period of time.”

More than a century later the mission continues at the new Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, the successor to the Illinois State Historical Library. It now preserves over 6,000 manuscript collections containing more than 9,700,000 letters, business ledgers, diaries, and organizational records in addition to 4,900 newspaper titles preserved on nearly 73,000 microfilm reels,

over 350,000 photographs, 4,000 broadsides, 2,500 films and videotapes, and more than 1,200 oral-history transcripts and 3,800 tapes.

The Library’s Henry Horner Lincoln Collection is the most complete holding of Abraham Lincoln’s pre-presidential materials. It preserves a printing of the Emancipation Proclamation signed by Lincoln as well as nearly 1,500 manuscripts written or signed by Lincoln. Ten thousand books and pamphlets, 1,000 broadsides,

and 1,000 prints and photographs complete this unsurpassed collection relating to Lincoln and his family. The collection contains letters, manuscripts, artifacts, photographs, prints, broadsides and family albums covering virtually any time period or aspect of Lincoln's legacy. One of only five original copies of the Gettysburg Address and the correspondence of Mary Todd and Lincoln are among the highlights of the collection.

## MUSEUM

The 100,000-square-foot Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum redefines the possible in presidential complexes. The museum's 40,000 square feet of exhibit space is considerably larger than exhibit space in any other presidential library. But what really sets the ALPM apart from every other historical museum is the scope, creativity and visitor engagement of its displays. Using advanced technologies normally reserved for theme parks, yet maintaining rigorous standards of scholarship, the ALPM presents a fully immersive theatrical experience enabling twenty-first-century visitors to inhabit Lincoln's life and times. They encounter historical settings, interactive exhibits and theatrical special effects that make the history engaging, both intellectually and emotionally.

Rather than duplicate sites important to Lincoln's life, the ALPM offers visitors a taste that encourages them to explore the Lincoln landscape of historic sites across Illinois and throughout the country.

**THE JOURNEYS**, two linear exhibits that takes visitors from Lincoln's boyhood log cabin through his presidency and assassination, feature:

**Slave Auction**—depicts a family being torn apart. This is a scene similar to ones that Lincoln almost certainly encountered as a teenager during a trip down the Mississippi River.

**Law Office**—Lincoln's 25 years as a lawyer are crucial to his political success, and this scene in his Springfield office also shows that he was a very permissive parent.

**Campaign of 1860**—If there had been television coverage of this most divisive election in U.S. history, it may have looked like this, complete with campaign commercials.

**The White House Blue Room**—here Mrs. Lincoln is being fitted for a ball gown by her dressmaker and close friend, Elizabeth Keckley, as she fights her own private war for social acceptance in the nation's capital.

**Whispering Gallery**—the wicked editorial cartoons and whispered comments from citizens in both the North and South surround visitors in this unsettling room that shows how unpopular the new President and First Lady were.

**Rumors in the Kitchen**—a reproduction of the Lincoln White House Kitchen where visitors hear black servants whispering rumors ranging from Mary Lincoln's sanity to the promise of emancipation.

**The War Gallery**—a number of displays and interactive exhibits describing the human tragedy and sacrifice of the Civil War. A stunning film compresses four years of conflict into four minutes, complete with an "odometer of death" synchronized to show mounting casualties on both sides.

**Ford's Theater and Lying in State in the Old State Capitol**—these two settings that are key to the assassination story are reproduced in nearly full-scale, one showing the moments before the fatal shot and the other Lincoln's casket as it was viewed by mourners.

**THE TREASURES GALLERY** displays on a rotating basis, the most important original items in the Lincoln collection, including a handwritten copy of the Gettysburg Address, Lincoln's stovepipe hat, his glasses and shaving mirror, Mary Todd's music box and jewelry, among other priceless artifacts.

**UNION THEATER** features the seventeen-minute "Lincoln's Eyes," a multi-screen, multi-media surround experience introducing the sixteenth president as seen through the eyes of supporters and detractors.

**GHOSTS OF THE LIBRARY**, a show that mixes a live actor and special effects to highlight the facility's world-renowned collection.

**MRS. LINCOLN'S ATTIC**, an area just for children with period costumes in their size, plus games and activities from the 1800s.

**ILLINOIS GALLERY**, where world-class, temporary exhibits are hosted in more than 3,000 square feet of space.

The Museum exhibits were designed by Bob Rogers of BRC Imagination Arts, Burbank, CA; the architect for the Library/Museum complex is Gyo Obata of Hellmuth, Obata + Kassabaurn, Inc., St. Louis, MO.

## YOUR REFERENCE MANUAL

This is your book. It gives you an outline of the Lincoln story and the work of the ALPLM, but it is up to you to personalize that story and make it your own. We all learn in different ways and this book is designed to be flexible to help you make sense of the story your way.

- Rearrange it.
- Write in it.
- Add articles, interesting facts, and research to it.
- Make notes.
- Use it as a journal to record your thoughts and feelings about Abraham Lincoln and the ALPLM.
- Share it with your fellow volunteers.

But most importantly—have fun with it!